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ABSTRACT

Noting that the transition to school often sets the tone for the child's future school experiences, this toolbox identifies 33 proven practices currently used by schools districts and early childhood programs throughout Vermont to help children make a successful adjustment to school. Beginning with a list of guiding concepts on transition and introductory remarks, the booklet presents practices categorized by priority: required, highly recommended, recommended, and optional. Each transition activity is identified by a number that can also be cross-referenced on the transition toolbox timeline at the end of the booklet; information is provided on the time frame involved, a description of the activity, delineation of who is responsible for completing the activity, and the necessary resources/costs to complete the activity. Required transition activities are transition planning for children with Individualized Education Plans, and kindergarten registration. Highly recommended activities include establishing a shared understanding of school readiness, transition planning for children with special needs, kindergarten screening, sharing information on classroom practices and expectations, and meeting with early childhood providers. Recommended activities include reciprocal teacher visits, community forum on transitions and school readiness, and information packets for parents. Optional activities include playgroups, "welcome to kindergarten" books or videotapes, portfolio presentations, and first day activities. Communities currently incorporating various activities are identified throughout the booklet. A suggested time frame for completing transition activities completes the booklet. (KB)

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Off to Kindergarten
Toolbox for Effective Transitions

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Prepared by
The Transition to School Committee
of the
Vermont Early Childhood Work Group

JANUARY 2003

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VERMONT'S VISION FOR YOUNG CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES

Every family in Vermont has the right to comprehensive, high quality child development services for its children. Every Vermont community shall nurture the healthy development of young children and strengthen families. To support communities, the state of Vermont will create a unified system of child development services which shares common standards for quality and respects the diversity and uniqueness of individuals and programs.

Off to Kindergarten: Toolbox for Effective Transitions was produced by the Transition to School Committee of the Vermont Early Childhood Work Group to support Vermont's Vision for Young Children and Their Families. Companion documents include: "*Off to Kindergarten: A Booklet for Parents, Caregivers and Schools,*" "*Moving On: Planning Your Child's Transition From the Family, Infant, Toddler Project to Essential Early Education,*" and "*Moving on Up: Making the Transition from Essential Early Education to Kindergarten.*"

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TOOLBOX FOR EFFECTIVE TRANSITIONS:

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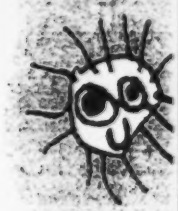
GUIDING CONCEPTS ON TRANSITION

1. Transitions should be viewed as an ongoing process rather than a single event.
2. Transition planning should begin early and ensure sufficient time dedicated by all involved.
3. Transitions involve changes for the family as well as the child.
4. The family's dreams, concerns, values, culture, language and experiences should be elicited, listened to, and honored.
5. Those planning transitions must keep in mind the child's and family's strengths, needs and preferences.
6. The family must be encouraged and supported to take an active role in helping to plan their child's transition.
7. The family should be assisted in understanding how services and supports will be provided in the new environment.
8. A planning process must be developed that is outcome-based, written, followed and clearly understood by all.
9. A collaborative spirit and partnership among all is to be promoted.
10. Coordination must be enhanced, alleviating duplication and overlap of services and efforts.
11. Regular contact among all team members must be assured.
12. Confidentiality for all parties concerned is respected.
13. A comprehensive plan is based on the child's and family's unique situation, not on labels or programs.
14. The number of changes, settings, evaluations, and new people that a child and family experience as a result of transition should be kept to a minimum.
15. When necessary, the child and family will be linked with naturally occurring supports and activities available in their own community. When none exist, they are created.
16. Children should be included and supported in community environments with their peers.
17. All existing strengths and resources of families, programs and communities will be examined and utilized.
18. Statewide equity and access to transition processes and resources for all children and families should be promoted.

Developed and adopted by the Transition Committee of the Vermont Early Childhood Work Group, April 2000.

INTRODUCTION



Going to kindergarten is a major milestone for all young children and their families. It signals a new level of independence for the child and entry into the world of academic and social expectations.

The transition to school is an important part of the child's educational experience and often sets the tone for the child's future school experiences. A thoughtful, positive transition can help the child and family view school and learning favorably. Research shows that children who enter kindergarten eager to learn and expecting to be successful are more likely to be successful in school and to accomplish their goals in life. These positive attitudes toward learning start when we are very young and persist through our adult years.

Successful transitions should not be left to chance; rather, they can be thoughtfully planned to ensure that the experience of going to school is a positive one. There are many actions that schools, early childhood programs, and parents can take to increase the likelihood of successful transitions for all children.

Off to Kindergarten: Toolbox for Effective Transitions identifies 33 proven practices currently used by school districts and early childhood programs throughout Vermont to help children make a successful adjustment to school. As partnerships are formed among parents, schools, early childhood programs, and community organizations, *Off to Kindergarten: Toolbox for Effective Transitions* can provide a menu to collaboratively plan effective transition opportunities for children and their families.

Off to Kindergarten: Toolbox for Effective Transitions is part of a three booklet series designed to improve young children's transitions to kindergarten. The other booklets are *Off to Kindergarten: A Booklet for Parents, Caregivers, and Schools* and *Moving On Up: Helping Children With Special Needs Make the Transition to Kindergarten.*

How To Use This Toolbox

There are 33 proven practices described in this booklet. They are categorized by Priority (Required, Highly Recommended, Recommended, and Optional) as well as by Suggested Time Frame (one year divided into seasons beginning with the fall prior to kindergarten entry). Each activity is identified by a number that can also be cross-referenced on the Transition Toolbox Timeline at the end of this booklet. Communities currently incorporating various elements may be identified throughout the booklet. For more information about those communities, it is suggested that you contact the Success By Six office or local school.

A version of *Off to Kindergarten: Toolbox for Effective Transitions* is available on-line that offers visual representations of items described. These resources are indicated by a lightbulb.

To access *Off to Kindergarten: Toolbox for Effective Transitions*, go to www.ahs.state.vt.us/EarlyChildhood and look under Publications.

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"Off to Kindergarten" Toolbox: Toolbox for Effective Transitions

Required Activities

1. Transition Planning for Children with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)

- Section 2361.1, *Transition for Children Moving into Kindergarten,* of The Vermont Department of Education Special Education Regulations, effective 8/16/2001, states:
  In order to ensure a smooth transition to kindergarten, the IEP team shall:
  (a) Meet three to six months prior to the child's entrance into kindergarten.
  (b) Include in the meeting a kindergarten teacher and a special education teacher or service provider from the elementary school.

Time Frame:

Required: Three to six months prior to the children's entrance into kindergarten.

Suggested: Earlier than three to six months prior to entrance based on children's individual strengths/challenges and family preference

Description: Transition planning for children with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) is critical to ensure continuity of services between settings and the sharing of information that will maximize the child's and family's positive adjustments to the new environment. Transition planning meetings must be held between the sending program, receiving school, and parents prior to the child entering kindergarten in order to develop effective transition strategies.
A written, individualized transition plan (that may be part of a child's IEP) should include a summary of the child's strengths, challenges, and goals. The plan should also specify activities, persons responsible, and time lines.

Who:

Primary responsibility: A collaborative planning team composed of, at a minimum, parents, early childhood service providers, receiving kindergarten teacher, and special education teacher or service provider

Others involved: Individuals necessary to support the child based on identified needs and transition goals, e.g., principal, speech-language pathologist, school nurse

Necessary Resources/Costs: Staff time, other resources based on needs of individual children (e.g., curriculum materials; adaptive equipment; substitute teachers)
"*Moving on Up*" booklet
(Call the VT Department of Education at 828-5115)

2. Kindergarten Registration

Suggested Time Frame: Late spring and late summer

Description: Kindergarten registration provides school personnel with necessary information about the child, thereby allowing them to make a variety of decisions about the child's kindergarten experience (class placement, curriculum design, special accommodations, etc.). Parents typically provide schools with information concerning the child's health (including immunization records), previous early childhood education experience, general developmental issues, residency information, and emergency contacts.

Who:
Primary responsibility: Principal
Others involved: Kindergarten teacher, other school personnel, secretary

Necessary Resources/Costs: Time for planning, notification letters to parents, preparation of forms, follow-up with families

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED ACTIVITIES

3. Establishing a Shared Understanding of School Readiness

Suggested Time Frame: Six months to one year (development). Fall prior to kindergarten entry (distribution)

Description: A booklet outlining a common understanding of the elements of school readiness (children ready for school, schools ready for children, parents ready for school) is collaboratively developed by representatives from the schools, parents, early care and education providers, and interested others. In addition to highlighting the value of experiences supporting early development and learning, children's entry behaviors, skills, and knowledge in the following areas will be addressed:

- Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Health and Well-Being
- Communication
- Approaches to Learning
- General Knowledge and Cognitive Skills

Once established, the core set of behaviors, skills, knowledge, and learning opportunities are shared with parents, early childhood educators and caregivers, and school personnel prior to children's arrival at school with explicit guidance for adults working

with young children on developmentally appropriate behaviors and expectations. The booklet should not be used as a checklist of skills and knowledge required for school entry.

Who:
Primary responsibility: Early Childhood Council/Success By Six
Others involved: School personnel (kindergarten teachers, EEE, EEI, guidance counselors, principal, nurse), early educators, caregivers, parents

Necessary Resources/Costs: Time to develop expectations, limited costs to prepare and distribute materials

- Sample of "Shared Expectations Concerning School Readiness"
- Publication on "Children Ready for School" (National Education Goals Panel <www.negp.org>)
- "*Off to Kindergarten*" booklets
- "*Moving On Up*" booklets

Some Practicing Communities: Richmond Elementary, Molly Stark School (Bennington)

4. Transition Planning for Children With Special Needs

Suggested Time Frame: Three to six months prior to start of school

Description: There are some children not currently receiving special education services who, due to a variety of special circumstances (e.g., medical conditions, environmental risk factors, social and behavioral challenges, etc.), require unique accommodations. Early childhood providers can support parents in actively forming a partnership with school personnel to develop individualized, written plans maximizing the likelihood of a successful transition to school. Plans should include a summary of child's strengths, challenges, and goals. The plan should also specify activities, persons responsible, and time lines.

Who:
Primary: Early childhood providers, parents, receiving kindergarten teacher, guidance counselor
Others: Principal, speech and language pathologist, school nurse, mental health provider, medical provider.

Necessary Resources/Costs: Staff time, costs associated with accommodations and supports identified through planning process.

5. Kindergarten Screening

Suggested Time Frame:
Spring and late summer

Description: Kindergarten screening is a brief, formal or informal assessment process used by school staff to observe and better understand children in their development. Many districts are adopting play-based screening. If developmental concerns are suspected during the screening, referrals may be made for a more thorough evaluation.

Who:
Primary responsibility: Principal
Others involved: Kindergarten teacher, guidance counselor, parents, principal, nurse, home-school coordinator, speech and language pathologist, secretary, early childhood providers such as EEE staff

Necessary Resources/Costs: Time for planning and follow-up, pay for substitutes, summer stipends for staff time, notification letters to parents, copying of forms, name tags, snack.

6. Sharing Information on Classroom Practices and Expectations

Suggested Time Frame: Spring or early fall

Description: The school provides parents and early childhood providers with a description of the kindergarten program, methods of instruction and assessment, and activities used to promote skills and outcomes based on state standards. The information should address responsibilities of the school, parents, and children; resources; teacher availability to meet with parents; and learning expectations for kindergartners. The expectation that parents and teachers will work together to support classroom practices is also shared at this time.

Who:
Primary responsibility: Principal
Others involved: Kindergarten teacher, school board, PTO

Necessary Resources/Costs: Time, personnel for development, copying, space for presenting to parents.

7. Meeting with Early Childhood Providers

Suggested Time Frame: Spring

Description: Preschool providers are invited to share information about students with appropriate school staff (e.g., guidance counselors, principals, kindergarten teachers, home-school coordinator) to promote a better transition and school experience for all involved. A good tool to use prior to this day might be a collaboratively designed transition form that is completed for each incoming student and has already been discussed with the parents. It is necessary to obtain a release of information for each student discussed.

Who:

Primary responsibility: Early care and education providers, kindergarten teacher, guidance counselor

Others involved: Principals, home-school coordinator

Necessary Resources/Costs: Substitutes for both preschool providers and kindergarten teachers, copying, staff to coordinate appointed times.

8. Transition Forms

Suggested Time Frame: Late spring

Description: Parents, child care providers, and other early childhood professionals have five years worth of rich information to share about their children as they prepare to enter kindergarten. Transition Forms permit parents and providers to convey children's past experiences, learning styles, and accomplishments, thereby enabling kindergarten teachers to develop effective and appropriate learning opportunities for every child. It is strongly encouraged that forms provided to parents and providers be culturally and linguistically appropriate.

Who:

Primary Responsibility: Success by Six, elementary schools (for distribution of the forms), child care providers, parents, kindergarten teachers

Necessary Resources/Costs: Copying of forms and postage.

Some Practicing Communities: Bennington and Springfield

Kindergarten Transition Reference Guides - A guide for completing developmentally appropriate transition forms
bennsx6@sover.net

RECOMMENDED ACTIVITIES

9. Reciprocal Teacher Visits

(kindergarten teachers visit early childhood programs AND early childhood teachers visit kindergarten classrooms)

Suggested Time Frame: Fall (early childhood teachers visit kindergarten) and spring (kindergarten teachers visit early childhood program)

Description: This is an opportunity for kindergarten teachers to visit local early childhood programs to observe and interact with the children who will be attending their schools the following program year. It is an opportunity for early childhood teachers to observe the kindergarten program. These visits give teachers in both settings opportunities to develop relationships, share program information, and facilitate the transition planning process.

Who:

Primary responsibility: Teachers in kindergarten and early care and education settings

Others involved: Principal, integration specialist, guidance counselor, home-school coordinator

Necessary Resources/Costs: Stipends for substitute teachers.

10. Community Forum on Transitions and School Readiness

Suggested Time Frame: Late winter or spring

Description: Community forums are convened for interested persons to discuss ways for the community to assure that all children enter school eager to learn. Facilitated discussions may address the following topics:

- What does "ready for school" mean?
- What does a "ready school" look like?
- What actions can we take to ensure that children have smooth and successful transitions to kindergarten and first grade?
- What can parents, early childhood providers, and the public school do?

Who:

Primary responsibility: Principals with Early Childhood Council/Success By Six

Others involved: Parents, PTO, early childhood providers, pediatricians, school staff (administrators, teachers, guidance counselor, nurse, EEE / EEI, etc.), librarians

Necessary Resources/Costs: Time, space, relevant materials, publicity.

"Off to Kindergarten" booklets

"Moving on Up" booklets

National Education Goals Panel booklets on School Readiness (www.negp.org)

11. Generating Class Lists Early

Suggested Time Frame: June 1

Description: It is advantageous that schools prepare class lists before the summer recess. This information should be communicated to parents to assist with their planning so they may better prepare their child. When possible, class groupings should allow some flexibility to accommodate changes for children moving into the area or leaving.

Who:

Primary responsibility: Principal

Others involved: Guidance counselor, kindergarten teacher(s), EEE teacher

Necessary Resources/Costs: Time for planning, notification letters to parents.

12. Information Packets for Parents

Suggested Time Frame: Spring

Description: A packet of information is distributed to parents that may include:

- *"Off To Kindergarten"* booklets
- Schedule and registration forms for summer transition activities
- School calendar
- "Who Do I Call" flow chart
- After-school programs for the fall
- Town library information
- Parks and Recreation information
- Home-school coordinator's schedule and contact information
- Play groups

Who:

Primary responsibility: Principal and/ or designee

Others involved: Home-school coordinator, administrative assistant

Necessary Resources/Costs: Copying and distribution.

13. Transition Bags for Children

Suggested Time Frame: Early spring

Description: Transition Bags contain a variety of materials to provide incoming kindergartners with hands-on learning experiences prior to kindergarten. Transition Bags are often given to children at registration, helping to make this a welcome event for both children and parents.

Who:

Primary responsibility: Success by Six, School Transition Coordinator

Others involved: Kindergarten teacher, school secretary, nurse

Necessary Resources/Costs:

Costs are approximately $10/bag (purchased in bulk).

Transition Bags: construction paper, markers, crayons, scissors, pattern blocks, scratch pads of paper, glue sticks, pencils, canvas bags, children's book (popular choice: *The Kissing Hand*).

Plus:

- *"Off to Kindergarten"* booklet — Vermont Dept of Education jsquires@doe.state.vt.us
- Activity Booklet—open-ended suggestions for activities using the above supplies: Success by Six bennsx6@sover.net

14. Field Trips for Children to Their Kindergarten Playground

Suggested Time Frame: Late spring and summer

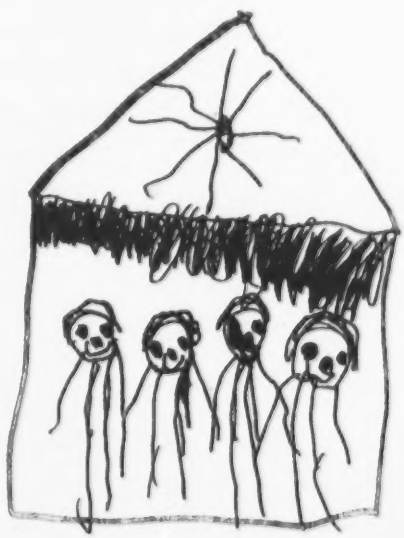
Description: By taking the preschoolers to visit their respective new kindergarten playgrounds, children can become familiar with their new environment in a relaxed manner. In addition to familiarizing children with the physical environment, it allows them to establish and strengthen relationships with their peers.

Who:

Primary responsibility: Early childhood educators

Others involved: Children

Necessary Resources/Costs: Transportation



15. Field Trips for Children to Kindergarten Classrooms

Suggested Time Frame: Spring or late summer

Description: This is an opportunity for children to visit their schools, classrooms, and teachers for the upcoming kindergarten year. Becoming familiar with their new educational environment will ease the transition to school.

Who:
Primary responsibility: Early education teachers
Others involved: Children, kindergarten teachers, principals

Necessary Resources/Costs: None

16. Move-Up Day (also called "Step-Up Day")

Suggested Time Frame: Spring or late summer

Description: Move-Up Days occur when all incoming kindergartners have the opportunity to attend a "practice day" at kindergarten. Move-Up Day typically includes:

- Riding on school bus
- Meeting the teacher
- Visiting the classroom and touring the school
- Having time to play and participate in common activities (reading a story, having a "lesson" to bring something home, snack, etc.)
- Preparing something that will greet children when they return in the fall (e.g., photographs or drawings).

Some Move-Up Days are held when regular kindergarten students are not present (possibly attending their own move-up to first grade).

Who:
Primary responsibility: Principal
Others involved: Kindergarten teacher, nurse, guidance counselor

Necessary Resources/Costs: Additional transportation for children.

17. Kindercamps

Suggested Time Frame: End of summer

Description: Kindercamp is a school-sponsored transition activity typically taking place a week or two before kindergarten begins. Kindercamp may be offered to all children entering kindergarten or to a targeted group of children entering kindergarten. During kindercamp, children and parents meet the kindergarten teacher and other school personnel and become familiar with the school building and grounds. Children participate in developmentally appropriate kindergarten activities within the context of their new classroom. This may occur with or without their parents present.

Who:
Primary responsibility: Principal
Others involved: Kindergarten teachers, paraprofessionals, guidance counselor, nurse, physical education teacher, possibly art and music teachers, bus drivers

Necessary Resources/Costs: Summer stipends for staff time and program materials.

18. Welcome to Kindergarten Telephone Calls

Suggested Time Frame: Summer

Description: The kindergarten teacher makes phone calls to families whose children will be entering kindergarten. Welcome calls give parents the opportunity to ask questions about the classroom, school, and expectations.

Who:
Primary responsibility: Kindergarten teacher
Others involved: Parents, children

Necessary Resources/Costs: Costs to cover summer stipends for staff time.

19. Welcome Notes Sent to Kindergartners

Suggested Time Frame: Summer

Description: Prior to the start of school, kindergarten teachers send children a "welcome to our classroom" postcard, note or letter which may also include upcoming events or a reminder of supplies needed for school. Notecards may be purchased commercially or made by staff.

Who:
Primary responsibility: Kindergarten teachers
Others involved: Guidance counselor

Necessary Resources/Costs: Supplies, postage and staff time.

20. Home Visits

Suggested Time Frame: Late summer or early fall

Description: Prior to the start of school, kindergarten teachers or other school representatives make scheduled visits to the homes of parents whose children will be entering school. The purpose of these visits is for the teacher to introduce herself, meet the child and family members, explain the kindergarten program, and gain information about the child that would ease the transition to school. In some situations, visits may be made to a parent's workplace, although it is preferred that the child be

present. Some schools may choose to conduct home visits during the first week of school in lieu of holding classes.

Who:
Primary responsibility: Kindergarten teacher
Others involved: School nurse, EEE teacher, guidance counselor

Necessary Resources/Costs: Costs to cover summer stipends for staff time.

21. Practice Bus Ride

Suggested Time Frame: Spring or summer

Description: Children ride bus with or without parents to promote their comfort and confidence and orient them and their families to the bus route and routines. The bus ride may occur, for example, on a regular school day with current students, be specially arranged just for incoming kindergartners when school is not in session, or occur during "Move-Up Day."

Who:
Primary responsibility: Principal, bus driver
Others involved: Parents, kindergarten teachers

Necessary Resources/Costs: Additional transportation, staff time.

22. Open House for Families

Suggested Time Frame: September to October

Description: The school designates a time for families to acquaint themselves with the building, classroom staff, and other parents. Students have a time to "show off" their new environment. The principal, teachers, and others may address parents in large or small groups.

Who:
Primary responsibility: Principal
Others involved: School staff, parents, students, parent organizations

Necessary Resources /Costs: Space, materials, refreshments.

23. Parent-Child-Teacher Meeting

Suggested Time Frame: Upon request

Description: Parents can contact the school to set up a Parent-Child-Teacher meeting if they have a special request or a concern regarding kindergarten events, activities, expectations.

Who:
Primary responsibility: Parent
Others involved: Kindergarten teacher, child, nurse, guidance counselor, home school coordinator

Necessary Resources/Costs: None

Optional Activities

24. Playgroups

Suggested Time Frame: Year prior to entry/ summer

Description: Parents of incoming kindergartners appreciate the opportunity to meet other parents (especially if new to the area), have their children get to know other children and have access to local resources and information. All this is possible with playgroups. Summer playgroups prior to the opening of kindergarten are particularly effective.

Who:

Primary responsibility: Parents, schools, local Success by Six programs, Parent Child Centers

Others involved: Faith communities, libraries, community facilities

Necessary Resources/Costs: Developmentally appropriate space (often in-kind), staff stipend/pay, equipment, supplies.

25. "I Can . . . Books"

Suggested Time Frame: Winter prior to school entry

Description: "I Can . . . Books" are portfolio booklets for families (or early childhood providers working with children) to document their child's knowledge, skills, and interests. Children have the opportunity to share their "I Can . . . Books" with kindergarten teachers prior or upon entry to kindergarten. The contents and format of an "I Can . . . Book" are best developed collaboratively on the local level.

Who:

Primary responsibility: Early Childhood Council/Success By Six

Others involved: Kindergarten teachers, parents, early childhood educators, and caregivers, PTO/PTA, other interested community groups

Necessary Resources/Costs: Time, personnel for development of books, book production costs.

"I Can . . . Book"

For information, contact Jim Squires jsquires@doe.state.vt.us

26. "Welcome to Kindergarten" Book or Video by Kindergartners

Suggested Time Frame: Spring

Description: Kindergartners prepare a booklet or video for preschoolers to explain things they will do and enjoy in kindergarten. Using children's drawings and words, booklets can be given to preschoolers prior to their entry (during registration, screening, orientation, or home visits) to help parents and children prepare for kindergarten. This may be done in conjunction with guidance activities.

Who:
Primary responsibility: Kindergarten teacher
Others involved: Kindergartners, guidance counselor, art teacher

Necessary Resources/Costs: Low-cost effort requiring time in class, copying costs, video production.
Sample "Welcome to Kindergarten" Book

27. Portfolio Presentations

Suggested Time Frame: Late spring

Description: Many children involved in early childhood programs may have developed portfolios reflecting their work in a variety of areas. Portfolio presentations are special events where children have the opportunity to show their accomplishments to their new kindergarten teachers. Portfolios benefit children who are proud of their work and inform teachers about children's skills, knowledge, and interests.

Who:
Primary responsibility: Kindergarten teacher, early childhood educators
Others involved: Children, parents

Necessary Resources/Costs: None

28. Count Down Calendars

Suggested Time Frame: Early summer

Description: Prior to the start of school, Count Down calendars can be distributed to children and families. Count Down calendars provide children and parents a fun way to track the number of days remaining until the first day of school. There are commercially produced Count Down calendars or this could be a planned activity for a Make It and Take It Night.

Who:
Primary responsibility: Schools, Early Childhood Councils, Success By Six, Head Start, Parent Child Centers, kindergarten teachers,
Others involved: Children and families

Necessary Resources/Costs: Supplies
Calendar available from "Gumdrops for Breakfast" 1-888-GUM DRPS

29. First Day Activities

Suggested Time Frame: First day of school

Description: The First Day of School America campaign encourages greater family involvement in and community support of education starting on day one of each new school year. Participating schools present programs for parents on this day and employers allow working parents time off to participate,

setting the tone for a positive and continued school-family partnership.

Who:
Primary responsibility: School principal
Others involved: Teachers, parents, business community

Necessary Resources/Costs: First Day activities can be simple or elaborate, no cost, low cost, or well-funded by area businesses and/or community agencies.

First Day: For more information about First Day and to receive a free First Day of School Activity Guide, contact the First Day Foundation at 1-877-FIRST-DAY or e-mail to firstday@sover.net or mail requests to First Day Foundation P.O. Box 10, Bennington, VT 05201. The website is www.firstday.org.

30. Big Buddies

Suggested Time Frame: Fall

Description: Big Buddies is an activity allowing older students in the school to be paired with kindergartners. The kindergartner can ask questions and follow the example of an older student. The older student has the opportunity to serve as a role model and assume additional responsibilities in the school setting.

Who:
Primary responsibility: Principal
Others involved: Students, teachers, guidance counselor

Necessary Resources/Costs: Time to plan, match, and prepare buddies.

31. Parent Partners

Suggested Time Frame: First day of school

Description: Each new kindergarten parent is greeted at the door on the first day of school by a kindergarten parent from the previous year. If space permits, new and former parents can talk about their first day experiences over refreshments in a private area of the school.

Who:
Primary responsibility: Principal, kindergarten parents from previous year
Others involved: Guidance counselor, PTO

Necessary Resources/Costs: Refreshments, meeting space.

32. "Make It and Take It" Nights

Suggested Time Frame: Fall

Description: "Make It and Take It Nights" are events where parents and children come to school to do projects and take them home. It's an informal time for parents, teachers and children to spend quality time together.

Who:
Primary responsibility: Teacher and principal
Others involved: Families, nurse, guidance counselor, home school coordinator

Necessary Resources/Costs: Snacks and materials.

33. Graduated Attendance for Full Day Kindergarten

Suggested Time Frame: Fall

Description: Some schools offering full day kindergarten prefer to begin with a shorter day and increase the number of hours over a week or two. Each school is unique so each time frame may be different.

Who:
Primary responsibility: Principal
Others involved: Kindergarten teachers

Necessary Resources/Costs: Transportation, childcare costs to parents

TRANSITION TOOLBOX TIMELINE

Priority	Fall Before Entry	Winter Before Entry
Required		• Transition Planning for Children with IEPs (1)
Highly Recommended	• Establishing Shared Understanding Of School Readiness (3)	
Recommended	• Reciprocal Teacher Visits (9)	• Community Forum on Transitions and School Readiness (10)
Optional	• Playgroups (24)	• "I Can . . . Books" (25)

Spring Before Entry	Summer Before Entry	Fall of Kindergarten Entry
• Kindergarten Registration (2)	• Transition Planning for Children with IEPs (1) • Kindergarten Registration (2)	
• Transition Planning for Children With Special Needs (4) • Kindergarten Screening (5) • Sharing Information on Classroom Practices and Expectations (6) • Meeting With Early Childhood Providers (7) • Transition Forms (8)	• Transition Planning for Children With Special Needs (4) • Kindergarten Screening (5)	• Sharing Information on Classroom Practices and Expectations (6)
• Reciprocal Teacher Visits (9) • Community Forum on Transitions and School Readiness (10) • Generating Class Lists Early (11) • Information Packets For Parents (12) • Transition Bags for Children (13) • Field Trips for Children to Their Kindergarten Playground (14) • Field Trips for Children to Kindergarten Classrooms (15) • Move-Up Day (16) • Practice Bus Ride (21)	• Field Trips for Children to Their Kindergarten Playground (14) • Field Trips for Children to Kindergarten Classrooms (15) • Move-Up Day (16) • KinderCamps (17) • Welcome to Kindergarten Phone Calls (18) • Welcome Notes sent to Kindergartners (19) • Home Visits (20) • Practice Bus Ride (21)	• Home Visits (20) • Open House for Families (22) • Parent-Child-Teacher Meeting (23)
• "Welcome to Kindergarten" Books/Video by Children (26) • Portfolio Presentations (27)	• Summer Playgroups (24) • Count Down Calendars (28)	• First Day Activities (29) • Big Buddies (30) • Parent Partners (31) • Make It And Take It Night (32) • Graduated Attendance For Full Day Kindergarten (33)

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